

CHANGE THE NAME OF ARKANSAS

By CASSIUS M. JOHNSON

[During the discussion of a bill introduced in the Arkansas Legislature to change the name (or pronunciation) of the State of Arkansas, Cassius M. Johnson arose and said (shaking his head and looking fierce, and kind of swelling around in his little circle—tucking up his wristbands, and now and then straightening up and beating upon his breast with his fist, saying "Hear me, gentlemen"))]:

Mr. Speaker:

The man who would "Change the Name of Arksansas" is the original, iron-jawed, brass-mounted, copper-bellied corpse-maker from the Wilds of the Ozarks! He is the man they call Sudden Death and General Desolation! Sired by a hurricane, dam'd by an earthquake, half-brother to the cholera, nearly related to the smallpox on his mother's side! Look at him! He takes nineteen alligators and a barrel of whiskey for breakfast, when he is in robust health; and a bushel of rattlesnakes and a dead body when he's ailing! He splits the everlasting rocks with his glance, and squenches the thunder when he speaks!

Change the Name of Arkansaw! Gosh No! Stand back and give him room according to his strength! Blood's his natural drink, and the wails of the dying is music to his ear. Cast your eyes on the Gentleman! and lay low and hold your breath, for he's 'bout to turn himself loose! He's the bloodiest son of a Wildcat that lives, who would Change the Name of Arkansaw! Hold him down to earth, for he is a child of sin! Don't attempt to look at him with your naked eye, Gentlemen! Use smoked glass. The man who would Change the Name of Arkansaw, By Gosh, would use the meridians of longitude and the parallels of latitude for seine, and drag the Atlantic Ocean for Whales! He would scratch himself awake with the lightning and purr himself to sleep with the thunder! When he's cold he would bile the Gulf of Mexico, and bathe in it! When he's hot, he would fan himself with an equinotical storm! When he's thirsty, he would reach up and suck a cloud dry like a sponge! When he's hungry, famine follows in his wake! You may put your hand on the sun's face, and make it night on the earth; bite a piece out of the moon, and hurry the seasons; shake yourself, and crumble the mountains, but Sir: you will never Change the Name of Arkansaw!

The man who would Change the Name of Arkansaw, would massacre isolated communities as a pastime. He would destroy nationalities as a serious business! He would use the boundless

vastness of the Great American Desert for his Private Graveyard! He would attempt to extract sunshine from Cucumbers! Hide the Stars in a Nail-Keg, Put the Sky to soak in a Gourd, Hang the Arkansaw River on a Clothes Line; Unbuckle the belly-band of time, and turn the Sun and Moon out to pasture; but you will never Change the Name of Arkansaw! The world will again pause and wonder at the audacity of the lop-eared, lantern-jawed, half-bred, half-born, whiskey-soaked, hyena, who has proposed to Change the Name of Arkansaw! He's just starting to climb the political banister, and wants to knock the hay-seed out of his hair, pull the splinters out of his feet, and push on and up to the Governorship!